

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NUCLEAR POWER AND PROLIFERATION

REF: TAIPEI 1425

1. FOLLOWING COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS BY AMB. PORTER CONCERNING REF-TEL ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

2. EXCEPT FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS, ESSENTIALLY SAME REPORT, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS COULD BE MADE OF SEVERAL COUNTRIES EMBARKING ON A NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM, SINCE SUCH PROGRAMS FREQUENTLY PROVIDE MEANS FOR OBTAINING NUCLEAR MATERIALS THAT COULD BE USED FOR MANUFACTURE OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES. IN SOME CASES, POWER PROGRAM IS DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO FACILITATE, AT SOME TIME, EXERCISE OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE OPTION. THIS IS PREVIOUSLY WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO STRENGTHEN NPT AND IAEA SAFEGUARDS, AND TO DEVELOP SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES, INCLUDING EXPORT ARRANGEMENTS AMONG SUPPLIERS, TOGETHER WITH SOME FORM OF BUILT-IN PENALTIES OR SANCTIONS, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND PROHIBITIVELY COSTLY FOR A COUNTRY TO ABROGATE ITS SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENTS AND CHOOSE THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE OPTION. THIS CONCEPT IS HARDLY NEW, AND BASICALLY IS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN STRIVING TO ACCOMPLISH

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OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

3. I BELIEVE WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING NOW IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES (NPT PARTIES OR NOT) I.E., EITHER EVIDENCE OR SUSPICIONS OF VARYING DEGREES THAT THEY HAVE DECIDED TO EMBARK ON PROGRAMS CLEARLY INTENDED TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES, OR AT LEAST TO DEVELOP THEIR PROGRAMS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY COULD MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION VERY QUICKLY, STEMS LARGELY FROM THE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST OF LAST YEAR, AND THE RATHER MILD SLAP ON THE WRIST GIVEN INDIA BY THE US AND OTHERS IN RESPONSE TO THAT ACTION. MANY COUNTRIES WERE LOOKING TO THE US FOR LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE AND FOUND OUR RESPONSE AMBIGUOUS AND WEAK. THIS LACK OF A STRONG RESPONSE HAS, INTER ALIA, STRONGLY STIMULATED AND GIVEN IMPETUS TO THOSE PERSONS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES WHO FAVOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE OPTION, AND SERVED TO WEAKEN THE INFLUENCE OF THOSE WHO ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A PEACEFUL AND FULLY SAFEGUARDED NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM.

4. MOREOVER, IT BROUGHT THE MATTER AND THE POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES MORE CLEARLY TO THE ATTENTION OF POLITICAL LEADERS IN MANY COUNTRIES, WITH AN UNFORTUNATE FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT THE ABILITY TO HAVE A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE OPTION IS BY NO MEANS RESTRICTED TO JUST THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. THIS UNDOUBTEDLY WHETTED THE APPETITES OF MANY SUCH LEADERS WHO SEEK PRESTIGE AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COUNTRIES. THE ADVERSE PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION IN THE US TO THE PROPOSED SALES OF NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL, WHICH WAS LARGELY, I THINK, DUE TO THE HIGHLY VISIBLE MANNER IN WHICH THEY WERE ANNOUNCED, MERELY ADDED FUEL TO THE FIRE, AND SERVED TO STRENGTHEN THE ALREADY BLURRED DISTINCTION IN THE PUBLIC MIND BETWEEN A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY IN THE MILITARY SENSE AND A PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY PRODUCING PROGRAM. BITS OF MISINFORMATION WERE SUBSEQUENTLY PILED ON TOP OF OTHER MISINFORMATION APPEARING IN THE MEDIA (THIS IS STILL HAPPENING; WITNESS THE RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF EXPORTS OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO SOUTH AFRICA), TO THE POINT WHERE HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE STATEMENTS AND GROSS INACCURACIES HAVE NOW
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BEGUN APPEARING EVEN IN DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS PASSING THROUGH THIS MISSION. AN EXAMPLE OF THE FORMER IS A STATEMENT ON PAGE 27 OF MARCH 19 ISSUE OF CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS (ARTICLE ENTITLED: "ARGENTIAN ACHIEVES "NEAR NUCLEAR" STATUS"), WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS: "IF ARGENTINA OPTS FOR NUCLEAR ARMS DEVELOPMENT, THERE WILL BE LITTLE THE U.S. CAN DO TO DISCOURAGE OR PREVENT IT." (IF THAT IS THE CASE, WHY

ARE WE SPINNING OUR WHEELS?) AN EXAMPLE OF THE LATTER WAS A MAP IN THE MARCH 5 ISSUE OF CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS PURPORTING TO SHOW PLUTONIUM-PRODUCING STATES NOT COVERED BY IAEA SAFEGUARDS, WHICH CONTAINED SEVERAL GLARING ERRORS. (CFR SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED A CORRECTIVE STATEMENT ON THIS.)

5. WHILE A STEPPED-UP, ACCURATE AND PROPERLY DESIGNED PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM COULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD RECTIFYING SOME OF THE DAMAGE DONE TO OUR NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS FROM THE FLOOD OF MISINFORMATION FLOATING AROUND, I AM LESS SANGUINE ABOUT THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF AN NPT REGIME (EVEN ONE STRENGTHENED BY SUPPLIERS EXPORT ARRANGEMENTS) THAT FAILS ALSO TO INCLUDE SOME RATHER DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES TO POSSIBLE VIOLATORS, WHICH SHOULD BE MADE WIDELY KNOWN AT LEAST PRIVATELY, IF NOT PUBLICLY, IN ADVANCE. TO BE MEANINGFUL, SUCH CONSEQUENCES MUST GO BEYOND THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

6. AS FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON POINTS MADE REFTTEL, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNTS OF 93 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM MENTIONED IN PARA 1.B IS CERTAINLY KNOWN, SINCE IS WAS SUPPLIED BY THE US AND IS UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS. LIKEWISE, THE SPECIFIC QUANTITIES AND LOCATION OF PU239 MENTIONED PARA 2, WHICH ACCORDING TO IAEA IS ALL OF US-ORIGIN, IS KNOWN TO IAEA AND SUBJECT TO IAEA SAFEGUARDS. ACQUISITION OF SUCH MATERIAL IS, OF COURSE, SUBJECT TO US EXPORT CONTROLS, WHETHER OBTAINED COMMERCIALY OR NOT.

7. RE PARA 3 REFTTEL, GROC ARGUMENT THAT THEY NEED DOMESTIC REPROCESSING FACILITY BECAUSE BRITISH NOW REQUIRE RETURN OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES TO CUSTOMER, WHICH GROC CANNOT ACCEPT, LACKS VALIDITY AND CREDIBILITY, SINCE THEY
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WOULD PRESUMABLY GENERATE SUCH WASTES THEMSELVES IF THEY BUILD THEIR OWN PLANT.

8. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT KEEPING US INFORMED ON MATTERS OF THIS KIND.

9. FYI: AMB. PORTER REQUESTED THAT FOREGOING, WHICH WAS PREPARED PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM POST APRIL 19, BE DISPATCHED. LABOWITZ

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